PRICE: 10 cents

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MURRAY'S EYE OPENERS Nº 6

Freak Reformers and Marplots

FADS, FAKES, FOLLIES AND HOBBY FIENDS

Some Human Tragedies, Farces and Comedies

BY

NORMAN MURRAY
Organizer and Lecturer
International Philosophical Society

NORMAN MURRAY 233 ST. JAMES STREET MONTREAL

1917 F. R. E. 128

PREFACE

The greatest difficulty in organizing societies now for ethical and cultural purposes is the great variety of sects, denominations all so dogmatically pronounced in their views and dividing themselves into hostile camps over the most trifling questions. Add to this the antagonisms caused by racial and language differences. I propose next winter 1917-18 to discuss the question of the utility of these varieties and to try to show the folly of people supposed to be educated and cultured to divide themselves into hostile camps over such trifling questions as occupy so much of the attention of these fanatics.

ADVENTISTS.—Of all the absurd theories with which diseased brains have worked themselves into hysterics with thousands foolish theories about this mysterious personage — Jesus — and his mission, this seems to be the most absurd, and the alphabetical order proposed to be followed in this criticism comes in the proper place in more ways than one. We could understand the Greeks expecting some important events to follow the re-appearance of Alexander the Great or the Romans Cæsar, but it puzzles any student of human ethics to fathom the utmost folly of this absurd delusion. As the wish is often the father of the thought it is interesting to try to fathom the motive of this delusion. According to all accounts given of the first coming of Jesus his mission was a failure from every natural point of view. The foolish Jews were looking for a warrior to deliver them from what they considered a gentile yoke, the rule of the Romans, when this mysterious personage is said to have made his appearance. He accomplished nothing from a material point of view. As a Saviour of any kind he was a complete failure.. There are indeed some excellent maxims connected with his name and mission which might have saved the Jews much of their troubles since his time but only a small seetion of them accepted the reform doctrines and as they were characteristically persistent in preaching the to them news, though not new to the Gentiles and the majority were equally tenacious of their own old ideas the whole ended in disaster for both parties. The minority were persecuted as all minorities are where the people are of a fanatical disposition and in turn the Gentiles, feeling some sympathy for the persecuted Jewish minority turned on the persecutors and they have been persecuted in many parts of the world ever since so it is hard to understand the psychological basis of this delusion, so we will dismiss it as one of the many examples of numan folly.

AGNOSTICS.—It is an old saying that politics like poverty makes strange bed fellows, so following the alphabetical form will be likely to bring extremes together sometimes, and so it happens in this case. As no one knows more about the origin and destiny of man more than any other it is hard to say why any one should accept this name for himself. It is a case, however, of the one who professes to know less knowing more than the one, who to use a common expression, knows all about it. It gives however too much ground for the enemy and a positive attitude is a much safer ground to take if one chooses to debate with religious fanatics.

ANARCHISTS.—This name has had a bad flavour for some years in European history. Its adoption by some people who in the ordinary affairs of life appear to possess ordinary common sense shows the lob-sidedness of human nature. There are so many of the human race so deficient in reason and self-control that no people can get on without some form of law and order as some of these people seem to think could be done. The strange thing about

these people is that they often come into conflict with the officers of the law in various countries by taking the law into their own hands and use violence which is the prime object of all organized societies to put down. They show by their conduct the folly of their theories. Some people suggest that the reason they would like all laws to be abolished is the difficulty they find in behaving themselves.

ANGLO-SAXONS.—This is a good illustration of the tenacity of old traditions. As we all know or ought to know, the Anglo-Saxons were Germans. We may form an estimate now of what the original Anglo-Saxons who came to the British Isles in the fifth century after the Romans left were like. They did not seem to think that the natives had any rights they were morally bound to respect. Too much of this spirit still remaining has a great deal to do with much of our troubles in Quebec and Ireland and in many other parts of the Empire. The Saxon to this day lacks sympathy with most races that he comes in contact with. He is not hard to get along with when the other man understands him and does not expect sympathy.

ANGLICANISM. — This word shows some more light on the subject dealt with in the article before. The English people imagined that they would solve the complex religious question that kept Europe in turmoil for centuries by simply substituting England for Rome. They have not solved the question yet and they are not likely to solve it finally by that method. Their church indeed is in many respects the broadest and most liberal of all the churches of the British Empire so much so indeed that it is a puzzle to many how it manages to hold together.

ATHEISTS and **THEISTS.**—An atheist is about as foolish a name as any man with a reasonable amount of common sense can adopt. It only gives bigots and fanatics an excuse to do him mischief. No philosopher ever was an atheist and no atheist ever was a philosopher. Most people believe that there is some plan and design in the universe, though the famous watch theory is long ago partly exploded by the evident foct that though the watch shows evidence of design the watch knows nothing about its maker and it is equally evident that man after all his long search for his maker is still as much in the dark as ever. It is unwise however to think of reforming society by teaching atheism. Though worshipping a being that has not yet revealed himself to man seems foolish, it seems that most wise men agree that the fear of som epower above himself helps man to control his passions and the idea may be useful from an ethical point of view. When we come to the Atonement we will deal with the folly of trying to flatter that power to get favour. To adopt the name of theists does not appear to amount to much as all the gods are mere human creation.

ATONEMENTS.—This has been the chief means of priestcrafts from the beginning of human history. As mankind in general adopt the theory that there is some power above man to whom he is responsible and liable to receive punishment from, crafty men have found this a profitable means of getting a revenue from their foolish fellow creatures by undertaking to settle matters with the gods for them. The various methods of

atonements from the old animal sacrifices of the ancients to the absurd theory taught by all Christian denominations that belief in the atoning value of the death of Christ will atone for breach of the moral law of nations by the simple process of giving assent to an absurd theory would require a good deal of space.

BAHISM—is one of the newest things in religious delusion. The founder of this new sect pretends to be the latest receiver of divine revelation which without denying the use of the others in their day yet is going to supercede them.

BAPTISTS.—The principal distinguishing point of this sect is that they do not consider the mere sprinkling of a little water on the face of an infant as sufficient means of initiation into the mysteries of the Christian religion. One point however that seems to be in their favour is that they defer initiation till the applicant comes to mature age.

BIBLIOIATRY.—This is the strangest and most absurd kind of fetish in human history. A scrap-book of disconnected Hebrew folk lore is raised on such a pedestal that the mere reading of portions of it at stated periods, in many cases every morning and evening is considered a sacred duty, the neglect of which causes a person to be looked upon by his neighbours as a sign of depravity.

BLASPHEMIES.—This is a foolish habti very common among professing Christians of using lightly the name of their God. They seem to be even more given to this foolish habit than unbelievers.

BOODLERS.—While this class of people do not profess to be strictly reformers, yet their ideas seem to be that it is quite proper to get as much of other people's property as they can without being caught. If some people who profess to be teachers of morals would give a little dose of hell fire damnation to such people instead of denouncing honest people for not swallowing all their thread bare theories about salvation by simply believing in Jesus we might expect some improvements in public morals.

BOOT-BRUSHING is a mania with some people and while it may be quite proper to keep boots clean to adopt the mania of permanent polish seems futile and foolish.

CELIBACY.—Why some people should imagine that they are holier than others by going through life single instead of being in pairs as nature intended them is one of these things that is hard to understand.

CHRISTOLATRY.—This is the greatest superstition of our day as it has been for 1,500 years. Many good men and women have found consolation in this practice. Why it should be so is one of the many mysteries of human history. Many people have suffered martyrdom for the mere differences of opinion as to the mere form this worship should take.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.—This is one of the latest delusions that has afflicted Europe and America. Most of those touched with it are people who do not have to work for their living. The cure mostly consists of getting the patient to change his melancholy hobby which indeed is a wise thing to do but there is nothing new in the cult except the pretention and the confidence Game attached to the cult.

CLERICALISM and **ANTICLERICALISM.**—The clergy pretend to be a class apart by themselves whose business is to settle affairs between the gods and man. Whenever men will learn wisdom enough to cease to supply the cash to keep them in idleness they will disappear. Abusing or insulting them while so many people still believe in their usefulness only creates sympathy for them. Let us attack the ideas and not the teachers of the ideas if we expect to pull down the strong holds of superstition.

COMSTOCKISM in the United States is something like what John H. Roberts tries to be in Montreal, directors of public morals. This is not done by a campaign of teaching public and private marols but by a sort of key-hole spying system after the act. If half the energy and money spent on fighting the saloons were spent in providing decent public conveniences, lavatories, etc., the saloon evil would not have become such a nuisance as it has become which caused the recent drastic measures against it.

CREMATION.—I have known people who were gone almost crazy through the advocacy of this idea. After all it does seem to matter much whether the mortal remains go up in smoke or are returned to dust in its natural element from whence it came — the ground.

CROSS (The).—It is subject worthy of the consideration of all real genuine reformers whether the universal exhibition of a representation of a dead man on a cross should be allowed in public schools. Continual contact with such scenes certainly does not appear to make for the elevation of the human race. The living has a natural repugnance to the close association with the dead.

DANCE, EUCHRE and CARD PLAYING MANIA.—This mania needs checking for it never tends to the elevation of humanity.

DEMOCRACY.—This is the latest delusion that seems to take hold of some people. While hereditary aristocracy has the seeds of degeneration in itself it does not follow that it is wise to leap headlong into the other extreme. The masses are too ignorant of various phases of life necessary for rulers of the people to know. A wiser plan would seem to be to get selectt element of the common people to take part in politics instead of the whole.

DEVIL.—Whether there is a personal prince of darkness or devil or not we do not know. We know there is a great deal of wickedness in the world.

DIVORCE.—The trouble with too many people in the world is that they too often wish to involve others with their own troubles. People who were once lawfully married according to the laws of organized society should not expect society to bother itself with their affairs any more. If they can't live peaceably together let them separate but htey should not ask society to legalize any more marriages for them while both parties to the first marriage are still living.

DRUNKENNESS.—This has long been a great nuisance to society. Alcoholic drinks certainly have their uses and it has seemed to me for many years that the habitual drunkard is the party that should be more severely punished than he has

been and not the man who supplies drink to other people who know how to use it without abusing it.

EDUCATION.—This is one of the latest fads that is making so much trouble to modern society. Children of hard working farmers whose fathers made comfortable homes for themselves in the forests think hoeing potatoes and milking cows beneath them, after they get little education, sell their father's farms and look for easier ways of making a living. Mankind has always been divided into classes and high education is very useful and necessary for the few that form that class but any kind of education which causes the masses to despise manual labour is going to ruin that country ultimately.

EVOLUTION.—This is another fake theory that is not likely to raise humanity to a higher moral level. No god, no hereafter for man to look forward to and that he has slowly evolved from the polly-wag up to the monkey and finally to the full developed man is not likely to elevate humanity. As no one ever saw a mankey becoming a man the whole hypothesis may be thrown into the waste paper basket. Since the beginning of human history the dog, the cow and the horse have been the very same kind of animals. The bee made the identical same cells and the birds built their nests the same way and as far as we know the human brain had the same number of cells so the whole theory is much cry but little wool. Man has added item upon item to his knowledge but man has not yet evolved higher than the men that built the Pyramids or the Stoics or the early Greek sculptors.

EXCITEMENT.—This is a sign of degeneracy. Wise men and women don't run after excitement. People will go to the Alps and the North and South Poles for excitement while men like Thorean and Gibert White could find more profitable amusement studying nature right at their own doors.

FISHING.—Many men will sit all day watching for a small fish to bite the bait of their hook while they could with more profit watch the little ant busy making a hole for himself for the winter.

FREETHOUGHT.—Many people who call themselves freethinkers never had enough imagination to think an original thought. They can only bark at the flights of imagination of other people. Men like John Bunyan whatever we may think of their theologies at least had imagination and that is far more interesting than mere carping at theological mountebanks like Billy Sunday who knows how to interest the crowd far better than many of his so-called freethought critics.

FREELOVE.—This is nothing else but another name for prostitution. We may often know what they are by the ideas they advocate.

GAMBLING.—This is one of the lowest phases of modern life. Men will risk their own money on the mere chance of getting other people's money. Much of the stock exchange buying on margin without buying any stock right out is of the same nature. When society gets to a higher level these things will die a natural death.

GRAFT is a more or less polite name for stealing from the public. Men getting good salaries in the service of the public are not satisfied with good salaries but they must also take an extra slice for themselves out of every thing they handle.

HATS and HAT PINS.—These are expensive luxuries and often dangerous. Women will squander the money that their husbands sweat out of their hard working employs. These are often the causes of the present unrest, the extravagance of men and women with the profits they make out of other people's labour.

HEAVEN may be a beautiful idea with some people but I cannot understand what anything that has happened in Judae 2,000 years ago has got to do with people going either to Heaven or Hell.

HELL.—The fear of hell might be used as a hangman's whip to keep the wretch in order but when it is only used to cripple mankind for the sake of selling them crutches as the Christian plan of Salvation seems to do it cannot serve any useful purpose.

HOME RULE.—In view of recent developments in Ireland I cannot understand any Irishman with ordinary common sense hugging the delusion that Ireland would be better off under the domination of such types as the Sinn Feiners than they are at present. We have all much to learn yet and so have the Irish both North and South.

HORSE SHOE.—Can any one tell me how any one expects a bit of iron made into a horse shoe is going to bring him good luck?

HUNTING.—Could there be anything more absurd than the brutal sport of hunting foxes with men and dogs or going into distant parts of the world for the mere pleasure of destroying innocent animals.

LOVE is one of the most powerful forces of nature but much of what is called love now is mere animal passion and may be more properly called lust than love.

LYING.—People will lie for religion for the mere sake of increasing the number of a sect. They also lie by telling half truths when they relate the persecutions of others but don't tell of the persecutions on their own side.

JEWISH FETISHISM.—The folly of making a religious duty of reading this fabulous history passes comprehension and still the same people in many cases despise the Jews for still hanging on to what is supposed to be God's word in olden times. The paradoxes of the human brain are really marvellous.

LANGUAGE.—Fiends are the curse of any country when they suppress any language.

MANDAZNAN.—This is about as foolish a cult as any one ever launched on a deluded people. It consists mostly of some physical culture exercises which might be practised at any athletic club.

MARIOLATRY.—It is hard to understand why some people refer to the old pagans as idolators while they themselves continue a cult of praying to a Jewish lady who is supposed to have lived over nineteen hundred years ago.

MARTYRS.—See **Persecution.**

MATERIALISTS.—These people are people without imagination. They bring themselves down to the level of the animal world and they cannot understand why other people should cultivate the imaginative faculties.

METHODISM.—This is a term that of itself means nothing definite as methods in religious matters vary from time to time.

MIRACLES.—When resorted to prove the religion it supports to be false. Natural religion needs no special miracles.

NOVEL READING.—This is a modern craze with idle people that do not have to work as hard as other people to get a living. It requires little thinking as it is only gossip on paper instead of being between the living voices on the door steps. Imaginary gossip will do as well as real.

MONKS and **NUNS** and their detractors are both equally foolish. Their institutions however should be examined like all other human institutions, especially as people with morbid delusion require watching more carefully than ordinary people.

MONISM.—I don't see where this idea differs from the old idea that one God by uniform laws rules everywhere except that fanatics of the atheistic type prefer to think that blind force needs no guidance or direction.

MORMONISM.—This sensual cult is based on Old Testament stories and it is hard to understand why some people advocate legal penalties for practising what they were taught in Sunday School as the practises of God's specially chosen people.

ORANGISM.—One of the most foolish types of the present day. As far as its political basis is concerned its preposterous claims are not according to historical facts, for it was not at the Boyne that the Stuarts' pretensions were finally disposed of but at Culloden in Scotland over sixty years afterwards. Furthermore their ideas and practises are contrary to true imperialism where there is supposed to be no supremacy based on religious ideas, all people who are loyal to the Empire being supposed to be on an equality.

PERSECUTION and **MARTYRDOM** are equally foolish, wicked and useless as their effects are often contrary to the plans of both. The martyr sometimes creates sympathy by his sufferings but as the first law of nature is self-presenvation no one should overdo things to the extent of creating antagonisms that endangers his life and means of livelyhood. If an all powerful God wants people to worship Him in a certain way he can instil the idea into their minds as certain other instincts. That being the case the propagandas to advance certain ideas are all purely human and not in the least of divine authority. They are mostly business schemes organized by scheming parasites.

PLYMOUTH BRETHREN.—This is one of the most ignorant of the new ignorant sects where men without education undertake to teach a better kind of religion than an educated ministry. There never was a greater mistake. An educated ministry knows something about philosophy and history and are therefore often more reasonable than an ignorant laity.

POPES and **POPE HATERS.**—As long as so many people are foolish enough to believe in popes there will always be popes. The business of liberals is to see to it that their powers over people who do not believe in them are limited. This can more effectively to be done without the tirades that base and ignorant people often resort to.

PRAYING. was practised by the Pagans as well as modern Christians so that they borrowed the custom from the Pagans, but its usefulness is questionable though the custom may be harmless and a source of consolation to simple minded people.

PRESBYTERIANISM is a more or less democratic form of Christianity, but like other forms of democracy it has not yet proved its superiority over the episcopal system where the wisest leaders are given control of the show.

PROHIBITION.—This is one of the modern phases of fake reformations where one man presumes to dictate to another whether he can buy alcoholic drinks in certain districts or not. If our modern professional guardians of other people's morals were so successful in teaching the people ho wto live temperate useful lives as they are ni starting agitations, so many laws would not be necessary. Where people live virtuously prohibitory laws are not necessary.

PROSTITUTION.—This is one of the most degrading phases of modern society. If men were punished equally with the women in this matter some reforms might be expected.

PROTECTION.—This is a knawish political scheme for making one class of the people rich by law at the expense of the other part of the community.

RATIONALISM.—This is one of the most unreasonable of modern anti-religious propaganda for its propaganda mostly consists of abusing other people for believing in some kind of god and wishing to live after death and not adopting their new idol of evolution. Any propaganda more foolish carried on by men of education can hardly be imagined.

REVIVALISM. — Occasionally when people get into a more or less insane state of mind, emotional fanatics try to work up emotion and usually succeeed in upsetting the feeble minded to neglect their normal duties and start chasing will of the wisps as salvation sickness always are.

RITUALISM.—This is one of the surest proofs of the low conception some people have of a supreme being when they imagine that such tom-fooling as they practise can be pleasing to any being whom they profess to believe is infinite in power, wisdom, holiness and justice.

SABBATARIANISM. — Like ritualism this is another strong proof of human folly when they can imagine that any division of time which is purely arbitrary can be considered holier than another or that an all wise being is pleased with mere ces-

sation from work, often resting on fine weather in unsettled seasons when they ought to work when the weather is fine and rest when it is wet.

SCOTCH.—Scotland has been settled for nearly fifteen hundred years by two distinct races — Celtic mixed with Norse elements in the West and Germanic races in the South East. The Germanic element never tried to learn the language of the natives. Now that we are part of a great Empire such imaginary lines as the Tweed and memories of old border battles, Bannockburn, etc., should be forgotten. Let us be one united people. While the Highlanders should always preserve their separate identity they should consider all other natives whether in the South East of Scotland or England as one people and not continue to make two bites of a cherry.

SECULARISM.—Such people need never expect the masses of mankind to cease speculation about spiritual matters and another life beyond the veil.

SHAVING is one of the foolish habits of modern society. It is evident that nature intended the male sex to let the growth of hair on the face remain.

SOCIALISM.—This is the greatest political farce of the present generation. Ignorant fanatics led by interested demagogues seem to believe that they are better able to guide the destinies of their respective countries than the elected representatives of the whole. They would make all the industries of the nations one huge concern in each country, thus interfering with the liberty of the people who can do so to manage their own private affairs. It will never work and it will never be tried. The back-bone of the country is the farmer—all the other are mere auxiliaries.

SPIRITUALISM—is based on a morbid state of mind resulting from diseased brains and fakirs working their nefarious schemes on weak minded people.

SPORT is based on the love of excitement of people who have more time to spare than is good for them.

SUFFRAGETTES is another product of too much spare time on the hands of self-willed women.

THIEVING is a sign of depraved lazy nature that do not like hard honest work. Such people have always existed and it seems impossible to cure them.

THIRTEEN.—Why some people should attach any meaning to this number more than any other number is hard to explain. It is one more illustration of the varieties of human follies.

VEGETARIANISM is another foolish notion adopted by some people who ought to know better. Many illustrations could be given to prove that human beings as well as animals who use flesh meats are not any more savage than men and animals who feed on vegetables alone.

WAR is one of the most deplorable works of the human race. This brutal work seems to be a necessary evil in some cases as the alternative often is, as in the case of the present War with Germany — War or Slavery.

ZIONISM.—This movement is out of the most extraordinary case of paranoia in history. People whose ancestors are supposed to have lived in that barren bit of land called Palestine still claim it as their home.

APPENDIX

CATHOLICISM.—This claims to be a system of religion suitable to the whole human race, to which mankind must ultimately submit. As there never was and there never will be any one religion based on a pretended divine revelation, that the human race will ever accept, the use of such a word and the adoption of such a tittle by any sect or body of men, is quite contrary to the logic of world wide evidence.

CHRISTIANITY, is like X in Equations, in Algebra. It may mean a lot or nothing. Its history at any period since its commencement was always different from every other period and the older it gets the greater the variety of types professing it, at one period. It commenced as a tragedy and it filled Europe and other parts of the world with tragedies, farces and comedies ever since. How to get rid of such a plague has been the greatest problem of the greatest philosophers these countries have produced for over nineteen hundred years.

CONVERSION.—As differences of opinion in religion, politics, economics, etc., are the results of different temperaments, education, experience and environment, it is strange that any one should be over-anxious to turn another person over from one kind of opinion to another, about a lot of triffling questions that do not matter anyhow. The wisest way would seem to be to give information to those who appreciate it and to let those who don't want information alone.

MOTIVES.—Many people with peculiar fads, fancies, fables and follies are in many other respects excellent people. Their folly consists in imagining that their own pet hobbies will ever be accepted by the masses of mankind or that it would be any particular benefit to them to do so. The masses of mankind, fortunately, are guided more by common sense than by any particular creed, hobby or fancy.

NATIONALISM.—The only hope of small nationalities, retaining their old customs, languages and traditions is by becoming loyal allies of the stronger and more powerful neighbours. As self-preservation is the first law of nature it applies to nations as well as individuals. No strong powerful country whether it is a kingdom, a republic or an empire will ever allow any small hostile neighbouring tribe or

nation to put up an independent government with power to join another hostile nation.

NEW JERUSALEM CHURCH—Swedenborgians.—Of all the extraordinary fancies that have afflicted the people of Europe for the last nineteen hundred years and America since its colonization by Europeans this is about the obsurdest. When we compare the history of Palestine in general and Jerusalem in particular, it seems beyond human comprehension why any one should adopt any old or new Jerusalem as an ideal. The whole business seems to be a chronic case of pananoida. For me a new Scotland in general or the Highlands in particular would be much more desirable.

PACIFIST.—A quarrelsome person sailing under false colours, suspicious motives and possibly treasonable intentions. Instead of living quietly and peacefully as his name would imply he quarrels with his more patriotic neighbours who are willing to fight to defend their country from an outside enemy.

RATIONALISM.—This new cult as it is proclaimed in some of the English press of the day is one of the most irrational, unreasonable and senseless theories of our present degenerate age. How any one claiming to be rational expects the human race to give up its belief in some kind of design in the universe passes all comprehension. To expect to elevate mankind to some imaginary elevation without a model above a monkey and a polly-wag to start with is above the common sense method of reasoning. Nothing ever succeeds in carrying mankind with it that disregards common sense.

SAINTS.—Very often those whose name come down through history, as great saints, if the truth was told would be found to be very often played out old villains. It is a very convenient method for old thieves and robbers who have spent their lives in the service of the devil to be told that they can die in the odour of sanctity and die as saints by having some one else's righteousness attributed to them.

SINGLE TAXERS.—The prime object of governments being to maintain law and order, all should contribute according to their incomes whether they are manufacturers or land proprietors. While the population of towns give the extra value to the sites of towns and villages and therefore should reap the benefit it does not follow that they should tax the former for the extra value his labour gives to cultivated lands.

THEOSOPHY.—Consists of mere imaginary guesses at states of existence after the spirit shakes off its mortal coil.

UNIONISTS and ANTI-UNIONISTS.—Of all foolish agitations that follow the history of that extraordinary cult called Christianity the present agitation in Canada seems to be the most absurd. If any one of the three denominations, Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists wish to unite, it is a puzzle to any reasonable person why any one should try to stop them. The trouble seems to be that some of those who wish to unite with others wish to take some with them who do not wish to go while others who do not wish to go themselves wish to prevent others from going.

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